

Economic Redevelopment

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Topic Area: Economic Redevelopment

Action Item

Continue to implement brownfields pilot projects.

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) continued to expand its emphasis on community involvement by focusing on environmental justice communities as part of the brownfields economic redevelopment initiative. To accomplish this task, OSWER is focusing on three specific action items highlighted in the Brownfields Initiative's Action Agenda, announced by Administrator Browner on January 25, 1995. The three action items include awarding 50 brownfields economic redevelopment pilots during 1995 and 1996, working with Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC), and building partnerships with key stakeholders to gain their input and advice on the Brownfields Action Agenda.

OSWER views the pilot projects as critical to integrating environmental justice concerns into the Brownfields Initiative and has awarded three brownfields pilots to date, two of which are in EZ/EC cities. Based on experience with the first pilot in Cleveland, Ohio, OSWER took steps to improve both the community involvement component of the selection criteria and the pilots' cooperative agreements. OSWER plans to further refine the criteria and cooperative agreement process based on comments solicited from the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC).

OSWER also will co-sponsor public forums in five cities across the country during the summer of 1995 (referred to as Loop Trips) with NEJAC Waste and Facility Siting Subcommittee. The objective of the Loop Trips is to solicit input from communities with environmental justice concerns and to develop strategies for integrating community involvement into the objectives of the Brownfields Initiative.

Completed Milestones

12/94	Adjusted criteria for brownfields pilot selection to better incorporate environmental justice concerns.
12/94	Awarded two pilot projects in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Richmond, Virginia, based on adjusted criteria.
12/94	Integrated a major emphasis on broad community involvement, including environmental justice communities, into the cooperative agreements of the first three brownfields pilots.
1/95	Presented the Brownfields Action Agenda for comment to NEJAC representatives at the Environmental Justice National Meeting in Atlanta.
3/95	Identified the brownfields redevelopment pilot program as EPA's signature initiative for the Agency's EZ/EC program.
3/95	Scheduled Loop Trips to be co-sponsored with NEJAC for the weeks of June 5 and July 21.

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Region 1

OSWER selected the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut, for a brownfields pilot project in September 1994. Region 1 worked with the city to award a \$200,000 cooperative agreement that was signed on September 30, 1994. The Region has also provided the city with technical guidance on complying with the *Federal Acquisition Regulations*. The city prepared and advertised a request for proposal for consultant services and reviewed 10 proposals. A six-member panel consisting of two members of the CLEAN Task Force, two city officials, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and the Institute for Responsible Management conducted the reviews and interviewed six short-listed firms in late January. Roy F. Weston was selected in late March 1995, and EPA attended the pilot project kickoff meeting with the city, Weston, and the CLEAN Task Force on March 30, 1995. Region 1 also assisted approximately 25 parties in the submission of brownfields applications that were due March 1, 1995. Brownfields pilot projects are expected to be awarded in May 1995.

Completed Milestones

- 9/94 Assisted in cooperative agreement application.
- 9/94 Awarded cooperative agreement.
- 3/95 Initiated assistance to the city with cooperative agreement implementation.
- 3/95 Awarded contract for consultant services.
- 3/95 Attended pilot project kickoff meeting.
- 3/95 Assisted interested parties in submitting brownfields applications.

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Region 2

Region 2 reviewed and assisted five cities (Camden, New Jersey; Jersey City, New Jersey; Buffalo, New York; Greenpoint, New York; Hunters Point, New York) in developing brownfields applications. Region 2 nominated and submitted two applications (Jersey City and Buffalo) to Headquarters for acceptance in late April 1994. In addition, the Region has assisted local communities with applications for the second round of brownfields programs. Region 2 also sponsored three brownfields economic redevelopment workshops: Newark (January 24, 1995); Buffalo (January 27, 1995); and Puerto Rico (February 4, 1995). EPA and the EPA Northeast Hazardous Substance Research Center (NHSRC) jointly conducted the workshops. The NHSRC is a

consortium of seven universities involved with education, research, and community outreach on hazardous substance materials and associated problems. The objective of the workshop was to introduce community leaders to the brownfields program and provide basic information about the key factors to address when incorporating environmental remediation into their urban renewal efforts.

Completed Milestones

- 4/94 Submitted brownfields applications to Headquarters for Round 1 selections.
- 11/94 Initiated assistance to potential applicants.
- 1/95-2/95 Sponsored brownfields economic redevelopment workshops.

Contact

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Region 3

Region 3 has entered into a cooperative agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to explore ways to facilitate redevelopment of contaminated sites within the city's large tracts of now-abandoned, industrially zoned land. The city has acquired, in lieu of unpaid taxes, much of the land, but large portions of it remain in private hands. There are strong environmental justice concerns because many of these sites are located in minority and low-income neighborhoods. The City of Pittsburgh submitted their cooperative agreement application in December 1994. The final application for the cooperative agreement with the city was approved on February 8 and awarded on February 14, 1995. In addition, the City of Philadelphia submitted their cooperative agreement application on January 6, 1995. Region 3 Hazardous Waste Management Division staff worked with city representatives to expedite the process and expects to award the agreement by April 1995. Region 3 has also assisted local communities with applications for developing brownfields programs with the City of Richmond being selected as a brownfields pilot on September 30, 1994.

Completed Milestones

- 9/94 Initiated assistance to communities in developing brownfields applications.
- 12/94 City of Pittsburgh submitted cooperative agreement application.
- 1/95 City of Philadelphia submitted cooperative agreement application.
- 2/95 Approved cooperative agreement with City of Pittsburgh.
- 2/95 Awarded cooperative agreement with City of Pittsburgh.
- 3/95 Worked with City of Philadelphia to expedite cooperative agreement application process.

Contact

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Region 4

Region 4 identified a Brownfields Coordinator in July 1994. The coordinator participated in the July 1994 brownfields workshop, which was attended by the Deputy Director for the Office of Environmental Justice; the December 1994 interagency brownfields meeting; the January 1995 regional brownfields meeting; the March 1995 EPA/State meeting; and a local environmental sustainability conference. In addition, the coordinator performed a brownfields detail in OSWER from June to September 1994, and in March 1995 submitted a brownfields article for publication in the National Association of Regional Project Managers Newsletter. Region 4 also assisted numerous parties in the submission of brownfields applications that were due March 1, 1995. Brownfields pilot projects are expected to be awarded in May 1995.

Completed Milestones

- 7/94 Established Regional Brownfields Coordinator.
- 1/95 Assisted interested parties in submitting brownfields applications.

Contact

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Region 5

The Cleveland brownfields pilot to return contaminated inner-city properties to productive use is an example of using creative alliances to address environmental justice needs. Current brownfields redevelopment efforts in Region 5 have centered on building State capacity to redevelop brownfields sites by: (a) providing over \$1 million in core grants and site assessment grants to help States develop, expand, and promote voluntary cleanup programs; (b) providing \$550,000 in site assessment grants to investigate brownfields throughout the Region; (c) developing Federal/State/local government “reuse action teams” to quickly solve site-specific environmental barriers to the redevelopment of property; and (d) adding addenda to existing Superfund Memoranda of Agreement that express “programmatic comfort” with State voluntary cleanups. Region 5 sponsored a “Regional Summit on the Urban Environment and Economic Redevelopment: Brownfields Strategies for Midwestern Cities,” in Chicago in March 1995. The Region has also detailed three employees to local governments to help cities build their capacity on brownfields. In addition, the Region, in partnership with the Office of Administration and Resources Management, created an Environmental Finance Center at Cleveland State University focused on training and outreach to local governments on how to finance brownfields redevelopment.

Completed Milestones

- 4/94 Detailed employees to local governments.
- 3/95 Sponsored Regional brownfields summit.
- 3/95 Initiated creation of Environmental Finance Center.

Contacts

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Region 6

Region 6 participated in the June 1994 brownfields pilot meeting in Dallas, Texas, to gain more information about economic redevelopment. Region 6 also selected a Regional Brownfields Coordinator to further implement brownfields pilot projects. The coordinator is working with cities and tribes in the Region to prepare brownfields applications. Region 6 is currently soliciting and submitting brownfields grant applications for an anticipated award in May 1995. The Region also recently participated in the National Brownfields Conference in February 1995.

Completed Milestones

- 6/94 Participated in brownfields pilot meeting in Dallas, Texas.
- 10/94 Selected Region 6 Brownfields Coordinator.
- 10/94 Worked with States and municipalities to determine interest levels in applying for "Round Three" brownfields grants.
- 1/95 Mailed solicitation letter to mayors and tribes.
- 2/95 Participated in the National Brownfields Conference.

Contacts

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Region 7

Region 7 is exploring opportunities available under the brownfields pilot projects as part of its environmental justice initiative. The Region has contacted all four States within its jurisdiction and a number of cities regarding the brownfields pilot program and grants available through Headquarters. To enhance economic redevelopment, Region 7 is working with the four States on their voluntary cleanup programs and anticipates further efforts to assist and build capacity in these programs. Region 7 recently participated with a group of individuals from all EPA Regions and Headquarters to further understand and apply brownfields concepts. Region 7 will continue to work with the group to promote brownfields redevelopment in the Region and nationwide.

Completed Milestones

- 5/94-1/95 Contacted States and cities regarding brownfields pilot program.
- 12/94-3/95 Participated with Headquarters and other Regions in efforts to understand and apply brownfields concepts.

Contact

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Region 8

Region 8 has initiated the Sand Creek Pilot Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Project in partnership with the Cities of Denver and Commerce City. A facilitated discussion resulted in agreement to hold two focus group sessions, one with local lenders, realtors, and appraisers to identify barriers to economic redevelopment in contaminated areas or areas perceived to be contaminated. The second session was held with local neighborhood groups and business people to hear their concerns regarding cleanup and redevelopment.

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Region 9

Region 9 has outlined a strategy for the Brownfields Initiative and has designated a Brownfields Coordinator and established a Regional brownfields workgroup. The Region has moved forward on the following activities:

- Developed criteria to determine what assistance can be provided to prospective purchasers. This includes the development of a Regional “comfort letter.” The Region has also issued one covenant-not-to-sue;
- Educated lenders and members of the real estate industry to counteract the stigma of Superfund. Activities developing a matrix for use in determining when various types of comfort or prospective purchaser activities are appropriate;
- Worked with local governments to remove obstacles to redevelopment. The Region recently participated in a meeting in East Palo Alto to discuss ways to assist the city in redevelopment; and
- Met with the State of California to encourage their voluntary cleanup program and to discuss how to provide comfort to participants who complete the requirements of their program. The Region has reached agreement regarding sites which are either placed in the No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) category or would never be of concern to EPA and will continue to work to define what level of oversight is appropriate for other sites.

Contact

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Region 10

Region 10’s Superfund program is working with Headquarters to identify potential pilots for the brownfields project. For this effort, Region 10 provided information to States, cities, or other interested parties, and assisted them in preparing proposals. Interested parties include the Cities of Tacoma, Seattle, and Kodiak; the Oregon State

Mills Project; and the Washington State Department of Ecology. If one of these proposals is selected, Region 10 will conduct oversight and assistance as necessary.

Completed Milestones

- 10/94 Provided information to interested parties.
- 10/94 Assisted interested parties with applications.

Contact

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Action Item

Develop and implement job training and community outreach activities.

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

OSWER worked with the Department of Labor to focus the efforts on local workforce development at brownfields pilot sites. In other efforts, OSWER is working with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to implement a minority worker training program. This program will start a series of national pilot programs designed to test a range of strategies for the recruitment and training of inner-city youth.

In addition, OSWER funded and organized the EPA-Morgan State University Summer Environmental Teacher's Institute, now in its third year. The Teacher's Institute is designed to recruit and inform teachers from schools located near Superfund sites about environmental issues and concerns with a focus on environmental education for public school students. OSWER made special efforts to recruit people of color to the Teacher's Institute. At the second Teacher's Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, over half of the participating teachers were people of color.

Completed Milestones

- 6/94 Conducted the second EPA-Morgan State University Summer Environmental Teachers Institute, in Baltimore, Maryland.
- 10/94 Awarded a cooperative agreement to Citizens for Environmental Justice in Savannah, Georgia, to conduct outreach activities to environmental justice communities.
- 1/95 Attended a minority worker training program workshop in Cleveland, Ohio, sponsored by NIEHS.
- 1/95 Awarded a cooperative agreement to the Rio Hondo Community College District in Whittier, California, which is in a predominately Hispanic community, to establish an environmental education and training center.

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Region 9

Region 9 has established an interagency cooperative working arrangement with the Public Health Service (PHS) through their Medical Assistance Program, particularly at two Superfund sites in Tucson, Arizona, and Del Amo, California. This arrangement with PHS ensures that health facilities are identified around Superfund sites and that the communities are informed of the availability of medical care which may be necessary because of exposure to hazardous materials.

In addition, the Region is working with the Department of Labor on a pilot project to design environmental curricula for the Job Corps program. EPA and Job Corps plan to hold a meeting of environmental training stakeholders to identify portions of existing programs which could be included, further define the labor market in this area, and determine how stakeholders may wish to be involved.

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Action Item

Explore the use of enforcement tools to stimulate brownfields development.

Region 1

Region 1 developed a number of initiatives to encourage beneficial reuse of Superfund sites. These initiatives encourage and promote economic redevelopment by eliminating liability barriers and matching remedies to projected property use. These initiatives cover three general areas: prospective purchaser agreements, status letters, and municipal liability. For prospective purchasers, the Region will expand agreements to include protection to lenders and tenants and, when appropriate, will expedite processing of prospective purchaser agreements. The Region is communicating its message to the public on its involvement at sites by issuing three types of status letters: (1) No Further Federal Interest Letters; (2) Voluntary Cleanup Letters; and (3) Clean Areas Letters. Region 1 will also seek legal clarification on the liability of municipalities that want to take back contaminated parcels of land abandoned by defunct companies, and return these viable parcels to the town's tax base. Region 1 presented these proposals to OSWER and the public in a briefing in January 1995. Implementation of these initiatives is pending.

Completed Milestones

12/94 Developed initiatives to encourage beneficial reuse.

1/95 Presented initiatives in briefing.

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Region 5

Region 5 staff met in April 1994 with members of the voluntary cleanup and enforcement programs of six States to discuss reviewing existing and proposed State programs, merging concepts of voluntary response and redevelopment, distancing EPA from direct site involvement, and addressing EPA liability issues. Economic development opportunities may arise and should be explored in conjunction with many activities that also promote environmental justice. Such opportunities are increasingly blocked by uncertainty about future tort, third-party, and Superfund liability. This uncertainty causes many potential investors to avoid developing the sites. Communities near brownfields sites face adverse economic effects such as declining property values and increased rates of unemployment.

In addition, banks commonly refuse to provide loans for redevelopment at sites they perceive as being contaminated. To address this issue, Region 5 issued, on July 12, 1994, the first “comfort letter” to a facility in the Cleveland pilot. This “comfort letter” stated that EPA had determined that the site will not require Superfund action and deferred all environmental decisions to the State of Ohio. This alleviated the bank’s concerns and resulted in the dispersal of redevelopment loans.

Completed Milestones

- 4/94 Held forum on State voluntary and enforcement programs.
- 7/94 Issued “comfort letter.”

Contact

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Action Item

Continue to work with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute to expand educational training in local communities.

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

OSWER conducted job training and development and community outreach activities linked to the Brownfields Initiative and specified in the Brownfields Action Agenda. For some of these activities, OSWER worked with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI) to expand training and curriculum development to community colleges located near brownfields pilots. OSWER established partnerships with community colleges in Cleveland, Ohio; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Richmond, Virginia.

Completed Milestones

- 1/95 Sponsored a HMTRI workshop in Charleston, South Carolina, which was attended by the Brownfields Community Colleges—Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, Ohio); Housatonic Community College

(Bridgeport, Connecticut); and J. Sargeant Reynolds (Richmond, Virginia) —along with many other community colleges.

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Region 2

Region 2 is working with the Northeast Hazardous Substance Research Center (NHSRC) to address the feasibility and requirements for local communities to receive grant funding from NHSRC under CERCLA's Technical Outreach Services for Communities (TOSC) program. TOSC funding is awarded to cities to educate and train personnel in the environmental field so that their employment prospects will improve. A pilot program sponsored by Jersey City, in conjunction with Jersey City State College and Region 2, trained approximately 40 unemployed local residents, and is helping place successfully trained individuals in the environmental job market. Region 2 is also providing educational support and technical guidance on using TOSC funds in Trenton, Newark, and Puerto Rico.

Completed Milestones

11/94 Conducted pilot program with Jersey City and Jersey City State College to train and place 40 individuals using TOSC funding.

Contact

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Region 9

Region 9 is supporting the development of a solid waste management curriculum at the Rio Hondo College. The curriculum is designed to work within the confines of Rio Hondo's existing Environmental Technology Program. This program is directed toward technician-level training. The student population at Rio Hondo College is ethnically diverse, and the program's marketing and recruitment efforts will be targeted toward minorities and women. Region 9 awarded a \$50,000 grant under Section 8001 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to support development of the curriculum. Project activities past the first year are pending acquisition of additional funds.

Completed Milestones

6/94 Negotiated final work plan.

7/94 Established an Industry Advisory Committee.

8/94 Developed and disseminated a Solid Waste Technician Skills/Competencies Assessment.

9/94 Developed solid waste curriculum.

1/95 Recruited students.

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